ISSUE 153 DECEMBER 2021

# KNOTTING MATTERS

## The Magazine of the International Guild of Knot Tyers

## INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

**The International Guild of Knot Tyers (IGKT) is a registered UK Charity No. 802153**

**President**
Colin Grundy
e-mail: **president@igkt.net**

**Hon Sec**
David Bodger
e-mail: **secretary@igkt.net**

**IGKT Postal Address**
IGKT, Oaken Cleave, Cobbaton,
Umberleigh EX37 9SG UK

**Membership Secretary**
Caroline Sandrey
15 Spey Close, Thornbury,
Bristol BS35 2NR UK
e-mail: **membership@igkt.net**

**Website**
**www.igkt.net**
Items intended for the website should be submitted to Colin Byfleet at
**cr@byfleet.org**

**Publications Group**
e-mail: **publications@igkt.net**

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## KNOTTING MATTERS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL GUILD OF KNOT TYERS

**EDITORIAL BOARD**
**Maurice McPartlan (Editor-in-Chief)**
**Gordon Teenan**
**David Pepper**

**knottingmatters@igkt.net**
**By post: Knotting Matters,**
**23 Stoms Path,**
**London SE6 3QJ, UK**

The editors welcome the submission of letters, articles, photographs and sketches for publication. Correspondence may be by e-mail **knottingmatters@igkt.net** but more extensive items, such as articles for publication, as well as any pictures, which should be of good quality, need to be sent as attachments. All submissions must include their author's name and e-mail or postal address.

If events are to be publicised in Knotting Matters, note the months of publication - March, June, September and December. Although the deadline for the next issue is given at the foot of the Contents page, please note that the editors begin putting it together at least three weeks earlier.

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# KNOTTING MATTERS

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**PLEASE NOTE: LETTERS & ARTICLES FOR THE MARCH 2022 *KNOTTING MATTERS* MUST BE RECEIVED BY 4th FEBRUARY**

**FRONT COVER: BUDDY TEENAN EXHIBITING KNOTWORK AT A FESTIVAL (SEE P27)**

# EDITORIAL

We sincerely hope that you are reading this before the end of 2021, which has been another year disrupted by the Covid pandemic. Some of our organisations are already beginning to get back to normal in arranging their activities. But there remain many uncertainties in various parts of the world.

Next year, 2022, is the Guild's 40th anniversary. It is clearly a significant year, and it is not by chance that Ipswich, the home ground of one of our founder members, Des Pawson, has been chosen to host the meeting. Please be sure to read the enclosed details about the proposed AGM, and respond accordingly. It is important for the organisers to have a good idea how many members and their families are planning to attend this prestigious event.

On p8, you will find a reminder of the recent change to the rules governing the George Hart Bursary, which opens up the award beyond IGKT membership, without affecting its core intention - to encourage interest and research in knots and ropework. In recognition of his generosity, the Trustees invited George to become a Patron of the Guild, and are delighted that he has agreed to do so.

You will notice on p45 Penny Bodger's review of a new Guild publication, *Exploring Turks Heads*, a compilation of articles from the first 150 issues of this magazine, the result of an idea first proposed by Frank Brown. Keen-eyed members will spot that the front cover is centred around a typically attractive drawing by Stuart Grainger, one of the IGKT's earliest and most prolific and prestigious illustrators. It had been hoped the book would be published alongside, and in celebration of, the 150th issue. But the work involved in producing a book of appropriate quality, covering a period in which *Knotting Matters* developed from an 18-page A4, *beautifully* hand-illustrated, monochrome production to the 52-page, A5 full-colour magazine it is today, took rather more time, energy and dedication than expected. We think it was worth waiting for, and hope you do too.

A look through the correspondence pages will find that the editors are more than willing to accept and publish letters commenting favourably on, or politely critical of, previously published items. In fact we welcome them, such debate can be the heart of a magazine.

Finally, our very best wishes to everyone, everywhere, for the coming festivities.

Maurice, Gordon and David.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Maurice,
Educational Charity?
Somewhere it says the Guild is run as an ‘educational’ charity. I don’t think so, or, if that is the case then there is a bit of a system failure. It’s been said before we’re like a bunch of American football players, in a huddle whispering to each other, we should be looking outwards, talking to people who don’t know the Guild exists and can’t get their shoe laces right. For a start, when you give someone your phone number or email address, why not have it printed on a business card with the IGKT logo etc on one side (there is software readily available on the IGKT website). It’s a simple way of spreading the word. Once in a while someone will ask ‘Hey, how do you do this or that?’
What’s the point in being introverted and arguing internally about how many knots are in *ABOK*? It achieves nothing, and besides it is a very useful conversation point to get across that knotting is not about what some people disparagingly call Boy Scout knots. The number doesn’t need to be split-hair accurate, just a handy round number is good enough. ‘3,800 knots you say, a knot a day for 10 years, that’s amazing!’ (Yes, I know it’s 10.441 years.) It gets people’s attention.

To underline the need for education, have a look at the photos. Some were taken on a working quay, others aboard a sea-going schooner. What do you see? Plenty of frayed ends, dodgy eye-splices, some half done, someone got the crown right then got stuck, lots of tatty electrical tape, pathetic attempts to melt ends and bad belaying. Not to mention polypropylene mooring rope in a bad state of UV-degradation. Walk round any marina and look for yourself.

What you won’t see is much in the way of fancy work, beautifully covered wheels, tillers or Ocean Plat mats, not a Monkey’s Fist or Mathew Walker in sight. Instead you’ll find an almost complete absence of any evidence

of knowledge of basic rope work; plastic widgets from the other side of the world to hold fenders in position; expensive liquids to dip the ends of the pretty-coloured rope in, embarrassing bits of rope saving a boat (costing as much as a small bungalow) from floating off in the night. What you would hope to see is at least a basic seaman-like standard of bread-and-butter rope work.

In much the same vein you would expect builders to know how to stop their 'builders' blue' from fraying, and how to effectively stop ladders and other long items flying off the back of their trucks. Mind you, since they seem to struggle keeping their trousers up, what hope is there? It would be interesting to know how many prosecutions there are for 'insecure load' per annum.

The other issue is the almost complete absence of natural rope, most people preferring petroleum-based synthetic, when natural would do perfectly well. Countless miles is made annually, using up fossil and chemical resources, causing no end of pollution. Hardly ever a mention of this (See *KMs* passim). It is time the knotting world addressed this and made a start in turning the corner and did our little bit to go green and save the planet. If natural rope got us up Everest, to both Poles, all over the Alps, supported foretop men 150ft up out on the yards shortening sail, rounding the Horn in winter in square riggers, it is good enough for modern plastic inflatable yachties in their Tupperware boats. Not forgetting builders and the like. Sadly, there's long been no hope for farmers.

This is in no way to ignore the sterling efforts of those stalwart members who buck the trend by using every opportunity to teach, demonstrate, educate and spread the word, often doing so while working away quietly in the background, hiding their light under a bushel. To them I say, "Keep up the good work, and more power to your elbow."

N King

Dear Maurice,

**About Toggle Ropes**

Following Gordon's article about making his toggle rope I remembered that, some years ago, Gordon Perry gave me a wartime-dated toggle rope and a photocopy of the *Royal Marine Training Pamphlet No 1 'Use of Toggle Ropes'* dated 1944. It was a reprint from an original in the Royal Marines Museum and for research and educational purposes only.

My rope is 6ft 6in from the top of the eye to the toggle and is ⅞ in diameter. The toggle is 5in long and 1⅛ in at its widest tapering slightly to $^{15}/_{16}$ in at the ends. The tucks of the splices are roughly 4 in long and the inside measurement of the eye is 4 in.

**DESCRIPTION OF A TOGGLE ROPE**

**Diagram I - Fig. 1.**

Length of rope when completed (6 ft. 3 in. to 6 ft. 6 in.).

(Allowances should be made for splicing)

Length of wooden toggle, 5½ in.

The toggle is groved in the centre and attached by an eye splice.

Diameter of toggle in the centre, before being grooved, 1½ in.

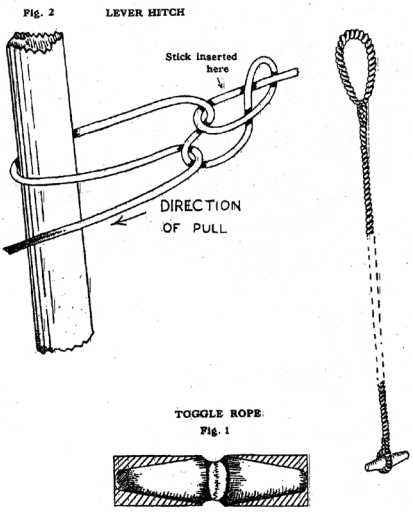
The end of the rope opposite the toggle ending in an eye splice, should be sufficiently large to allow of the toggle going through with some difficulty.

Circumference of the rope approximately 2½ in.

The wooden toggle may taper from the centre to about 1¼ in. at each end, but a cylindrical toggle is preferable.

The training pamphlet has 36 pages of which the first section to p15 is on knots.

The toggle rope first appears on p16 and is described as from 6ft 3in to 6ft 6in when complete. The rope is approximately 2½ in circumference and the toggle is 5½ in long.




The diagram shows a more tapered toggle than my example but the text says a cylindrical toggle is preferable.

The rest of the pamphlet shows ways of using ropes to scale cliffs, cross chasms and make a rope ladder.

All of these techniques can, of course, be done using ordinary ropes. The presence of toggles every 6ft would make some of them a little tricky, especially the abseil using the classic body wrap method shown, although they would provide a good hand hold when hauling or lowering.

I looked up 'Toggle Ropes' on eBay and war-dated ones seem to sell at between £25 and £75 with most going for £45.

These of course are the asking prices and after seeing some of the photos I feel that the items may not always be authentic.

I also found a reference to an American version used by Pacific Rangers using a heavy iron toggle with a collar either side of the splice to keep it in place. The idea was that the metal toggle was heavy enough to use as a weapon but they were replaced by wooden toggles to save weight.

When I was taking youth groups for outdoor activities, I made a couple of toggle ropes for the leaders, as sometimes the extra reach when going through deep mud or water was useful.

To ensure a tight fit for the eye I prepared the eye splice and held the rope and toggle gently in a vice to ensure that it stayed in the groove and so was able to get a close fit that showed no inclination to slide off the toggle.

Recently, I have seen, in outdoor and survival articles, that they are suggested again for hikers and campers as 'rescue ropes' and some versions use webbing with a loop at each end. Not as versatile as the toggle but a little more secure (perhaps) as campers have more time to prepare when encountering an obstacle than Commandos.

Some accounts suggest that the toggle ropes were only four feet long but I believe this to be incorrect.

Richard Hopkins

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Dear Maurice,

*KM* 152 was, in my view, a most dramatic academic *tour de force*, and made me wonder what the 'average' reader thinks of this amount of high tech content. It is nevertheless impressive that we have members who take the time to, and can, give us an insight into knotting at this level of sophistication.

I, as I'm sure the rest of us can, understand and appreciate these articles but as someone who operates at the 'bread and butter' end, or, as the Army calls it 'The Pioneer Corps', I might have trouble finding any practical application. Given *KM* can only publish what's provided, I occasionally could wish for a bit more, what you could call 'practical' stuff. I am also conscious of the fact that depending on which edition non-members get to see, *KM* could give them altogether the wrong impression. Lecturers will tell you that if you put up an

equation, you'll lose your audience, but what the high tech content does do, is give the Guild a sometimes much-needed gravitas to substantiate it's aims and objectives, as does the mention of Sir Vaughan Jones' work on knot polynomials, useful when faced with any unwarranted levity.

W Kerr

---

Dear Maurice,

In *KM* 141 p11, I bemoaned the continual parroting that the *Ashley Book of Knots* has nearly 4,000 knots, having been piqued by Des's article in *KM* 138 showing various such counts on covers of the book from different countries. My surmise then was that the actual count was more nearly a third: many knots are shown repeatedly, and many images are not of knots. Wanting to be sure of this, I decided to count the unique knots in the book myself; here is my report.

For my purposes, 'knots' to be counted are tied entities. So, Ashley's view that different tying methods distinguish different knots is put aside. Tying methods are important, indeed, but not for the general sense of "how many knots are there?"

Argh, it has been quite a slog doing this. There are probably more reductions to be made amongst Button and Lanyard knots, but I'm not keen to do all the tying and comparing, and so, coming last to Chapters 9 and 10, they got a quick review. And plats, sinnets and coverings? My eye runneth cross-eyed. Mercy, quickly, get me back to the Practical Knotting! (By the way, in the course of reviewing *ABOK*, I noted many errors I'd not previously seen. Is there an *ABOK* Errata being maintained by the IGKT? There should be.)

As one should expect, Chapters such as 2, Occupational knots, 40 and 41, on marlinespike seamanship, repeat knots that are presented in the chapters on knots-by-function. Also, even a casual reader who consults the Index should accept that there is much repetition of knots, as eg for 'Bowline' there are nine cited pages (six with images; another six pages missed), and for 'Clove Hitch' varieties there are 33 citations (21 with images; and another four missed pages). And re the Clove Hitch, I count the crossing-knot version as distinct from the end hitch, it has a different loading profile (both ends loaded vs. one).

I count 3,859 image numbers and 1,932 distinct 'knots': so, about 50%. Note that the end number 3,854 is added to by three '½' numbers: #794½, #1034½, and #2585½ and, in later editions of the book, #1425a, the knot that tied the IGKT together (and thus which should be our logo, the knot's ends assuming the four cardinal compass directions!). Ch.33, Tricks and Puzzles, gets my low count of 1 - same as for Ch.26's Holdfasts but over twice the image numbers.

Below is a table of my counts per chapter, which, note, depend upon the order of counting. I counted chapters grouping like-functioned knots (eg, Eye knots,

end joints, hitches) prior to those chapters such as Occupational Knots in which many of them are presented again. It seemed best to count knots in the functional areas, so to be better able to say how many end joints or eye knots there are, although with hitches, eg Ashley's treatment of them for various-sized objects, viz, ring/spar/pile, will see some functional chapters with low counts. The three columns are Chapter, Knots / Images.

| Ch | Knots | Images | Ch | Knots | Images | Ch | Knots | Images |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | 36 | 148 | **15** | 23 | 31 | **29** | 34 | 42 |
| **2** | 105 | 365 | **16** | 51 | 76 | **30** | 147 | 160 |
| **3** | 39 | 50 | **17** | 104 | 124 | **31** | 78 | 85 |
| **4** | 31 | 35 | **18** | 78 | 159 | **32** | 25 | 9 |
| **5** | 58 | 71 | **19** | 28 | 34 | **33** | 1 | 88 |
| **6** | 50 | 57 | **20** | 5 | 68 | **34** | 78 | 104 |
| **7** | 39 | 48 | **21** | 36 | 71 | **35** | 65 | 88 |
| **8** | 66 | 70 | **22** | 28 | 40 | **36** | 49 | 55 |
| **9** | 42 | 42 | **23** | 10 | 48 | **37** | 87 | 91 |
| **10** | 122 | 122 | **24** | 15 | 54 | **38** | 76 | 76 |
| **11** | 54 | 60 | **25** | 16 | 6 | **39** | 43 | 48 |
| **12** | 42 | 46 | **26** | 1 | 43 | **40** | 55 | 30 |
| **13** | 18 | 26 | **27** | 18 | 81 | **41** | 28 | 392 |
| **14** | 20 | 31 | **28** | 31 | 134 | | | |
| | | **ABOK TOTAL** | | **1,932** | **3,859** | | | |

Dan Lehman, City of Falls Church, Virginia, USA

## George Hart Bursary

As members know, the Trustees have decided that application for the bursary is now open to anyone satisfying the requirements outlined in the George Hart Bursary document enclosed within *Knotting Matters* 152. It is timely to mention that this enclosure has now been made available to the French and German organisations in order to widen the scope of potential applicants. The grants may include a contribution towards the expense of attending qualifying events or undertaking suitable research, which would otherwise not be within an applicant's budget. Members are reminded that if the funds are not distributed as bursaries, they will be applied to other projects.

The Trustees are delighted to announce that George Hart has agreed to be a patron of the Guild.

Dear Maurice

I thought your readers might be interested in a recent outing experienced by my brother Ken, my son Geoff and me, all Yaldens. We had planned last year, as in previous years, to represent IGKT as knot-tying artisans by being part of the Emsworth Art Trail. Emsworth is on the border of West Sussex and Hampshire in England.

The Art Trail each year is about 100 different artists 'at home' to visitors across the area and presenting Art in all its forms. Unfortunately, last year's trail was postponed because of Covid but sprung to life over two weekends in September this year.

Ken (The Knot) Yalden has for a number of years produced collaborative work with his good friend Ken (The Wood) Briffett, and the same was true again this year. See Acorn in picture awaiting a rope wrap.

This year our plans changed at short notice due to Ken's visit to St Richard's hospital, but he showed true determination to be at the trail, and he managed to be at home the day before the start.

We set up base in the grounds of the Friends of Emsworth Cottage Hospital and this proved to be an excellent location right in the centre of the action.

Given that the first day of the trail was World Knot Tying Day, we set our sights on introducing our visitors to an opportunity to tie knots which of course is the raison d'être of the Guild.

*Geoff at the trail*

Hands-on knotting took the form of teaching paracord dragonflies and key fobs. The key fob tying being one activity Ken had been able to continue whilst in hospital, and that proved to be very popular with both doctors and nurses alike.

Setting up stall in the sunshine we soon had visitors of all ages. Surrounding us, were other artists sculpting in clay, creating pictures on an iPad and a chap that had framed, shaped, wood cut-outs.

Early visitors were a young family whose mum soon learned enough to encourage her 5-year-old son to produce a dragonfly and then spurred on dad to help the 2½-year-old girl to join in the fun.

Not long after, a mum and three young girls arrived and said they had been waiting since our previous Art Trail outing at Emsworth Marina, two or more years ago. They were in fact wearing some paracord bracelets they had made during that previous event.

These girls had good memories and after refreshing them, were soon proudly wearing a new dragonfly brooch. It was these girls that appeared on each of the four days of the trail and it didn't take much persuasion to have them teaching the safe use of paracord, sharp scissors and a butane lighter to our visitors. We recognised at that point that as teachers you can feel you have achieved your purpose when your pupils are confident enough to teach both adults and youngsters.

The international aim of the Guild was particularly highlighted when a couple of nurses from the Philippines appeared. The young ladies had arrived clutching the Trail Guide passed to them whilst nursing Ken in St Richard's Hospital, Chichester. They tied their dragonflies and insisted on pictures being taken to "send home to mum".

During the two weekends we 'won' requests to repair/replace a rope door hitch. A visit to the local 'men's shed' where retirees share skills knowledge, and an invite to be the act at a small children's party.

Allan R Yalden

*Editors' Note: Dan Lehman sent a letter to the editors to complain that an illustrated letter from John Heselton in KM 152 contained errors. It began:*

John Heselton is wrong about Hensel & Gretel's[1] presentation of 143-A and -B. They got it right, and one can even see this - not always possible in their white-cord photos. Somehow, John must've gotten turned around or ... who knows?

*and went on to say he'd write again to explain the error. The first letter ended:*

So, with that in mind, perhaps future such letters or articles with checkable citations can be vetted by some keen eyes!?

*We think it is necessary to point out that KM is not a peer-reviewed journal. While we expect to take reasonable care, we do not wish or claim to test the veracity or accuracy of articles or letters published in KM. We are nevertheless willing to include* ***courteous*** *letters containing criticism of previously published items. We may also submit the criticism to the original author to allow them an opportunity to comment, as we have done in this case. Here is a précis of Dan's second letter.*

Dear Sirs,

I have sent a picture of the partially tied knot to confirm my suspicions. I also took a close-up of 143-A, wherein it becomes obvious that there is a problem. I attach that picture also. The right leg of the tucked-through-Overhand-knot bight is UNDER the twin standing parts of the Overhand-knot, and swings around anti-clockwise from that, under the crossing, to come over and thus surround those Standing parts, as it should. Your, thankfully, clearer photo of what you (mis-)see of Graumont and Hensel's photo shows a slip-knot which will pull out if loaded.

Dan Lehman

*and here is John Heselton's response:*

Dear Maurice, I promise that this will be the last time that I mention 143-A! I thank Dan Lehman, other members and yourself for suggestions, but it was yours that there was a slip-knot involved which provided the clue.

Instead of reeving the loop under the upper parts of the Thumb knot and then tying the Bowline-in-the-Bight movement from front to back, the loop should be reeved through the body of the Thumb knot and then the Bowline-in-the-Bight movement is tied from back to front.

---

*1 We assume this is Dan in jokey mode - Editors*

This exegesis has certainly caused a lot of knot-tying in the community, but it has been a remarkable exercise in group analysis and cooperation. Moreover, by now the whole [knotting] world knows how to tie the Thumb knot in the bight!
Regards (somewhat chastened),
John Heselton

---

Dear Maurice,
I've noticed some ignorant behaviour in stopping the end of rope or cord from fraying. Most people in applying electrical (insulating) tape, pull it to stretch and break it. It's the worst possible thing to do, because it will instantly try to shrink causing the end to come unstuck, and fairly soon the rest will follow. Don't be idle, cut it and make sure the end is stuck down square. Much, much more effective, if you must adopt this method of securing the end of a rope, is to use masking tape instead. Try it and you will soon find out.

Also, if you really, *really* must do a 'butane back splice', as it is called, do it properly.

Most people think they can seal 8mm or more of synthetic rope, in the open air, with a cheap pocket lighter: you can't. See the pictures.

You need a lot more heat than that. I won't go into any more detail here, as I wouldn't want to encourage anyone in this practice.
All such methods should be treated as very temporary or emergency procedures only. It is actually quicker and certainly more efficient, in most cases, to clap on a seizing, as a 'tar' would say, apply a whipping for preference or Constrictor knot, or, a long way down the list, just an Overhand knot (but don't let anyone know you belong to the IGKT).
Marine Monitor

Dear Maurice

What would happen, I mused one day, were I to haul apart the centre parts of a Spanish Bowline knot? After equalizing the loops and reeving each end through its associated loop, the result was a rather elegant and secure Sheepshank knot. (Spanish Sheepshank?)

John Heselton

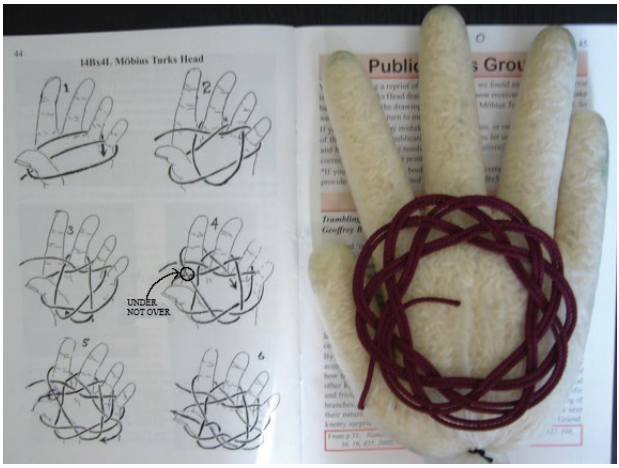
---

Dear Maurice,

Let's talk about this 14Bx4L, oops or is it 9Bx4L. You can count the bits in step #6. How I found the mistake was by using my 'handy hand' as I call it. It's one of the disposable gloves used when working around food. I filled it up with rice. This is like the bean bag chairs we used to sit in. It has weight to hold the strands in place and you can flip the hand over.

This makes tying the knots a lot easier, it only took me one tie to find the mistake. Step #4 is where it is on the Fourth Pass: this is UNDER not OVER and it all works out.

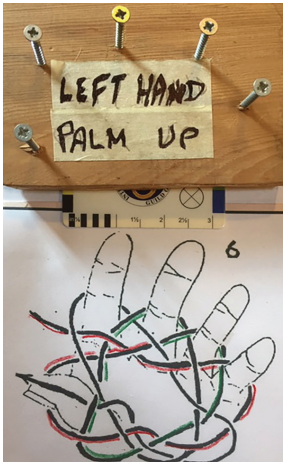
This may also help our disabled members and may help the hands that are not as steady as they used to be. I hope this makes it easier. When you make one, go back to the *KM*s that have knots you thought were to hard to do. For example, *KM* 98 (March 2008) has three spheroid cover knots to do in the hand, *KM* 109 (December 2010) has the Siamese TH by Jim Wolf. I had a hard time with that one, but now it's a breeze.




I don't know how many books show how to use one hand to build the knot, well this will let you use both hands.

David Lambert

Dear Maurice,




Being a bit of a minimalist with a penchant for experimenting, and liking a bit of a challenge, I thought I'd have a go at fig.6 of the TH in *KM* 152 on p44. Too easy to lose track, and difficult to break off for a cup of tea and a bun, trailing half a TH round the fingers. Much easier with a piece of wood and five screws making a rudimentary hand (sorry left handers); and my colouring did help. Some members will remember Charlie Smith doing even more complicated things on his actual hand, all the while discussing the situation in the Middle East or some other totally unrelated subject.

Gordon Teenan

---

Dear Editors.

On a recent voyage to dry dock, among the works scheduled to take place was the emptying, opening up and inspection of the tanks: fresh-water, sea-water ballast and fuel.

At the bottom of the sounding pipes in these tanks, were some old sounding rods and weights. The ones in the fuel tanks looked brand new, the ones from the sea-water ballast tanks must have been there for years given the growth that was on the brass: They had definitely been there longer than my six years on the ship, possibly since the ship was built 25 years ago.

Anyway, we removed the soundings rods and gave them a good clean up on the wire wheel and then set to work on them on the lathe and made some spikes. We made six in the end. I gave the two nicest to the cadets, in the hope they would use them to take up a bit of marlinspike seamanship and or some decorative ropework. I kept a few for myself, so now I have some nice tools to help with my ropework,

as well as having the memory of having dug them out of the bowels of the ship that I've been working on for a such a long time.

I have also attached some photos of my recently constructed ditty bag. It began as a simple bucket design which then grew and grew.

I'm quite proud of it, especially as I'm not much of a hand at sewing. Its main construction is 3-ply canvas, mainly to hide the stitching inside but also so that knives, scissors and spikes don't go through it. The base is wood with a layer of carpet to keep noise down. The exterior canvas is double-ply with the end folded over to house the points of the various tools.

I'm still in the process of designing pockets and storage on the inside, with the whole bag closed up with Monkey's Fists.

Several grommets on the outside allow for hanging palms and other bits and bobs. The handle is made from synthetic manila with nylon line sennits, Star knots and Turks Heads, and to finish it off, a nice patch of the guild.

It weighs a ton and drags on the ground when I carry it, but I'm still quite happy with it! I hope readers like the photos and the story behind them.

Liam Doran, New Zealand.

Dear Maurice,

Regarding the interesting article on neolithic nets in *KM* 152 showing how to display these knots using string figure techniques - I believe that our members would understand the relevance of the article better by looking at the diagram in *Prehistoric Europe - the economic basis* by JGD Clark referred to in the introduction.

I have attached a scan of the picture which clearly shows the different styles of net-making, all of which does not detract from the older Antrea net which used Sheet bends in the same way that modern hand netting is usually done today.

The Antrea net has been dated to 8540 BCE and was made from willow bast and originally was about 120m long by up to 1.5m deep. It had stone sinkers and floats made from dry bark and it is believed these were all lost when the canoe, in which they were being moved across a lake, capsized.

More can be found on the dating and location of the discovery by putting 'Paleoenvironment of the Antrea net find' into Google.

Richard Hopkins

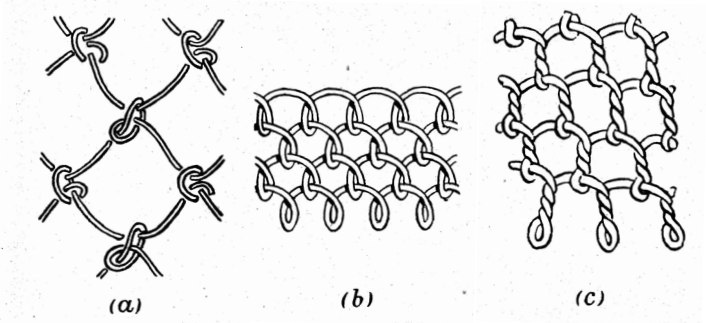



Fig. 125. Samples of neolithic knotted and knotless netting from Switzerland and Denmark. (*After Vogt*).
(*a*) Diagram of "lake-dwelling knot."
(*b*) Knotless net from Schötz, Luzern.
(*c*) Twisted knotless net of lime-bast thread, Ordrup Mose, Denmark.

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Dear Maurice,

In a recent episode of the *Chase* quiz programme on TV was a question:
By what other name is the Reef knot known? The choices were:
Hercules knot, Perseus knot, Achilles knot.
David and I were surprised to discover the answer: the Hercules knot. Are the Pearsons the only ones who didn't know this?!

Sheila Pearson

*Editors' note: Not all the editorial team knew it. We wonder what other knots have been known by a different name historically. Write to KM with your examples.*

# The Recurrence of Structure & Method

## by R Chisnal

The repeated occurrence of fundamental structures and tying methods can be observed in everyday and specialized knot-tying practices. This is an interesting phenomenon. Recognizing common structural themes and methodologies offers several advantages, for example, the identification, discovery and rediscovery of new or previously unknown knots. The parsing of structure and method can provide information regarding a knot's application and efficacy. Categorizing knots with similar underlying configurations, and adapting different tying methods to similar knots are additional benefits.

Some simple and well-known knots and loops are presented here to illustrate these ideas. The Overhand knot, the Figure Eight or Figure-of-Eight knot, the Double Overhand knot, and the Figure Nine or Intermediate knot (also known as the Blood bight in fishing) are examples of foundational structures. It will be shown that the same methods of tying one, two and three loops on a bight can be performed to create different knots using these basic formations.

First, the underlying knot structures themselves are related by repetition and variations in method. The basic Overhand knot is produced by one simple wrap finished with a tuck, thus establishing three stable planar-projection crossing points. If the working end or wend is wrapped in a similar fashion in the same direction another 180° and then tucked, the Figure Eight knot with four crossings is produced. Adding another 180° wrap yields a Figure Nine or Intermediate or Stopper knot (five crossings). The Stevedore's or Stevedore knot is the result of yet another 180° wrap (six crossings). Diverging slightly from this sequence, the Double Overhand knot is created by adding another wrap and tuck to an existing single Overhand knot (five crossings). Triple and quadruple versions (not illustrated) are tied by repeating the same action (seven and nine crossings, respectively). See Figure 1.

*1 From left to right: Overhand knot, Overhand loop, Double Overhand knot, Double Overhand loop, Figure Eight knot, Figure Eight loop, Figure Nine or Intermediate or Stopper knot, Figure Nine or Intermediate loop (also known as the Blood bight in fishing).*

If a rope or cord is folded in half to create a closed loop or bight, the end of the loop or bight can be treated as a working end, and loop versions of the fundamental knots mentioned, or knots on a bight, can be created. See Figure 1, above.

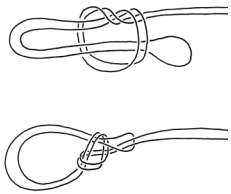
Going a step further, using different methods, two different types of double-loop formations can be created using any one of the underlying structures mentioned. For example, starting with an Overhand loop, the Bowline on a Bight or the Thumb Bowline can be tied. Tucking the bight through the Overhand knot creates two parallel slip loops. In this instance, 'Overhand knot' means the two parallel Overhand knots nested together. The Thumb Bowline is then completed by passing the tucked bight over and around the two loops and then snugging it beneath the Overhand knot, as shown in Figure 2. For brevity, this method will be referred to as the Tuck-Over-Snug method or TOS, as illustrated.

*2 The Tuck-Over-Snug or TOS tying method to create a Thumb Bowline.*

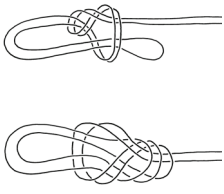
The method for tying the Bowline on a Bight is different. Again, starting with an Overhand loop, reach through the loop and grab the further two strands of the Overhand knot on a Bight. Pull those two strands up through the loop to create two new loops and reduce the size of the loop so it collapses around the main knot structure. Importantly, the knot needs to distort or capsize into its correct formation, as shown, so that it does not become an unstable slip knot of sorts. The tying method is depicted in Figure 3, below. Again, for brevity, this method will be referred to as the Enter-Pull-Invert method or EPI. There are several variations of this technique (Ashley, 1944). Both the TOS and EPI double-loop knots are superficially similar in that they start with the same loop structure, and the tying method involves manipulating the loop or bight in some manner. However, the results are different.

*3 The Enter-Pull-Invert or EPI tying method to create a Bowline on a Bight. The enter and pull steps are represented by the two central images. In reality, the tyer would reach up through the loop and move down to grab the lower bights and then pull them upward. Inversion occurs between the last two images.*

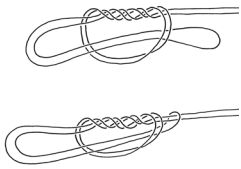
These same methods can be applied to other foundational structures. For comparison, the start and completion of the TOS method is shown for the Overhand loop, Figure Eight loop and the Double Overhand loop in Figures 4, 5 and 6.



*4 The TOS method applied to the Overhand loop.*

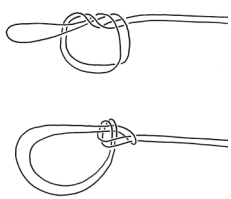


*5 The TOS method applied to the Figure Eight loop..*

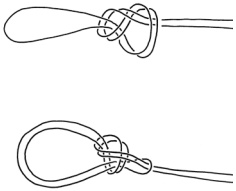


*6 The TOS method applied to the Double Overhand loop.*

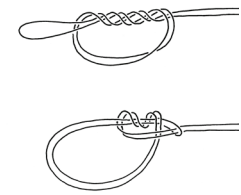
The start and completion of the EPI method, as it applies to those same initial loops, is shown in Figures 7, 8 and 9 for comparison.



*7 The EPI method using an Overhand loop to tie the Bowline on a Bight.*

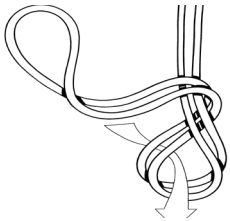


*8 The EPI method using a Figure Eight loop.*

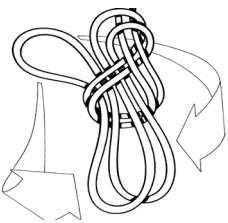


*9 The EPI method using a Double Overhand loop.*

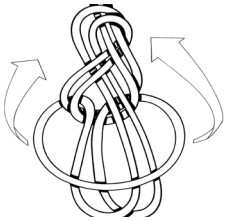
Figures 10 through 13 show the TOS method to produce the Double Loop Eight, with an alternative starting tuck. Either one bight can be tucked after the Figure Eight Loop is tied, as shown in Figure 5, or two bights can be tucked to create double slip loops, as shown in Figure 11.



*10 A alternative way of starting the TOS method.*



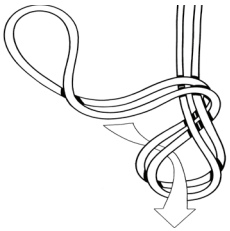
*11 Pass the single bight over the two loops.*



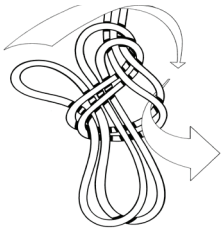
*12 Move the single bight back to the knot.*

*13 The completed Double Figure Eight loop.*

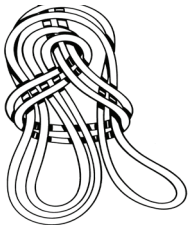
Using another strategy, it is feasible to produce triple-loop knots by retracing the bight around and back out of the initial knot structure. This procedure is shown in Figures 14, 15 and 16, which illustrate the tying of the Triple Figure Eight or CisSAR Eight.3 This third method will be referred to as the Tuck-Wrap-Exit method or TWE, of which there are two similar procedures. A TransSAR Eight (not illustrated) can be created if the bight is tucked and wrapped in the opposite direction.



*14 The TWE method can start with one of the two methods of initiating the TOS method.*



*15 The bight is traced back through the knot.*



*16 The completed Triple Figure Eight loop or Cis SAR Eight.*

The TOS, EPI and TWE methods can be applied to Figure Nine and Stevedore loops as well. There is yet another way to create triple-loops knots (not illustrated), some of which are utilized in rope rescue and slack-line set-ups. The procedure typically starts with a Figure Eight, Nine or Stevedore loop. Once the bight has been tucked into the knot proper, as shown for the Figure Eight loop in Figures 11 and 15, all three loops or bights can be clipped together and linked to an anchor point with a carabiner. In keeping with previous acronyms, this could be referred to as the Tuck-And-Clip or TAC method.

Each of the knots presented is chiral because it has an enantiomer or mirror-image (Chisnall, 2016, 2020). Of course endless topological Figure Eight knots are amphichiral. The same TOS, EPI, TWI and TAC procedures, amongst others, can be applied to more complex loops and different underlying structures. Substantial variation thereby arises out of a few fundamental knots and tying methods. With regard to the specific knots presented, questions about efficacy and safety are left to formal research and field testing, along with applicable mathematical modelling that are beyond the scope of this brief article. The appropriate application of a knot requires an assessment of characteristics such as its security, strength, complexity, sinuosity, ease of learning and remembering, potential for error, ease of dressing and checking, concatenation, distortion likelihood, and ease of untying after heavy or prolonged loading (Chisnall, 2020).

A small number of relatively well-known loop knots have been presented as examples to demonstrate the recurrence of structure and method. Many other

examples and possibilities of interrelated tying methods and knot structures can be found throughout the array of well- documented bends, hitches and other loop knots. The notion that basic structures and similar tying strategies can generate a wide variety of knots leads to exploration and discovery.

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## Endnotes

Although the capitalization of knot names is inconsistent throughout the literature, several authorities employ upper case first letters for knot names (Ashley, 1944; Budworth, 1983; Chisnall, 2016, 2020; Graumont & Hensel, 1952; Shaw, 1924).

A general review of the knotting literature shows that terminology is inconsistent and varied, and sometimes conflicting (Ashley, 1944; Birch, 2019; Budworth, 1983, 1999; Chisnall, 2016, 2020; Graumont & Hensel, 1952; Shaw, 1924). As those who study the evolution of language have learned, terminology changes according to regional standards and traditions, colloquialisms and slang, new technology, and the dissipation of legacy nomenclature (Bowren, 2017; Steels, 2017).

The labels CisSAR and TransSAR Eights are sometimes used colloquially in rescue work. SAR stands for Search and Rescue. Cis and Trans are terms adopted from chemistry to indicate which direction the bight wraps within the knot proper (Chisnall, 1994).

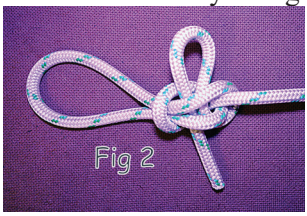
# SLIPPED KNOTS

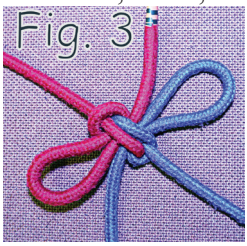
## by Geoffrey Budworth

When I applied for a change of posting from undercover work in the UK's Central London vice squad to Thames Division (the city's river police), a colleague advised me to learn the 'special' knot used by its officers to hang the duty boat fenders. Unfortunately, he didn't know what that was. But, as soon as I walked down the brow to the boat moorings, I spotted it. The mystery knot was merely a Clove Hitch with a bight or draw-loop (Fig. 1). As the division's 30 boats were afloat 24/7 in all weathers, even a soaking wet Clove Hitch could sometimes be tough to undo without it.

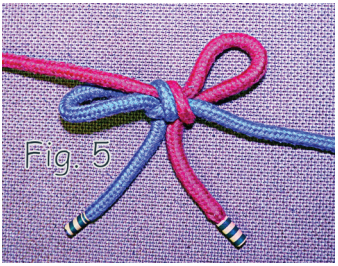
All knots that may resist untying can be made easier to release by including a draw-loop. The Reef and Granny bows (single or double) tied in shoe laces are knots slipped in this way, while the Highwayman's hitch is just one draw-loop inside another.

But almost every imaginable knot, bend, hitch, loop or belay, from the Angler's or Perfection loop (Fig. 2) to the Zeppelin bend (Fig. 3) can have a draw-loop inserted.




Try a Constrictor knot (Fig. 4) and the Fisherman's knot (Fig. 5).




Easier untying does not always mean quick-release, however, since there may still be knot parts to unravel or untuck.

For instance, a slipped Bowline becomes a simple Overhand or Thumb knot. Nevertheless, draw-loops deserve consideration. [Do not confuse 'slipped' knots that incorporate a draw-loop with 'slip' knots or 'slippery' hitches, which slide or fall apart.]

# Turks Head Enlargements

## by Manny Sardina

In this article I'll be talking about the two main enlargement processes for Turks Heads (THs). This is not the same as doubling or tripling the passes but results in additional bights along the outside rim of the knot that you start with, the base knot.

THs are named by the number of Leads (sometimes called Parts) and Bights in that order. Leads lead, is a good way to remember. So 16Lx9B or 16x9 TH both refer to THs with 16 leads and 9 bights. Another important rule for single strand THs is that the number of leads and bights must be mutually prime. In other words the only common divisor is 1. Six and four, for example, can both be divided by two, so a 6x4 TH cannot be made with a single strand.

My aim here is to compare and contrast the two enlargement processes as they are used on a 3x2 TH.

The recipe for creating a TH is called the run list, as can be extracted from Advanced Grid-Maker.[1] I will show the run lists here as we enlarge the 3x2 to a 5x4 (Enl. 1) and also a 3x2 to a 7x4 (Enl. 2).

The leads are the number of times the cord goes around the mandrel. Each bight is constructed from two half-cycles, a cord approaching the bight and then leading away from it. Half-cycle order numbers will be listed on the left followed by the necessary under/over sequence. Odd numbers travel from left to right and even numbers from right to left.

**Construction of a 3x2 TH**

1 Free Run. This is always a free run leading up to the first bight. Being right-handed my first half-cycle is left to right, yours may be from right to left.

2 O. In this case the first weave is over, so pass the working end over the standing end.

3 O. Going from left to right this time crossing over the cord.

4 UO. Going from right to left, go under and then over the cords. This brings the working end back to the standing end and finishes the 3x2.

1 http://freakinsweetapps.com/knots/knotgrid/advanced.html

## Enlargement Process 1

Enlarges the 3x2 to 5x4, adding 2 leads and 2 bights.

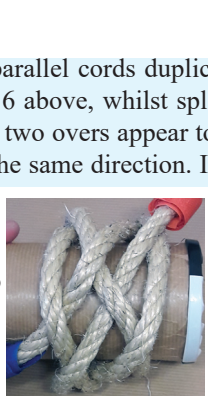
U O
Working end travels on the RIGHT of the standing end copying the overs and unders, doubling up the standing end.

At this stage with all TH enlargements, e
with an over, enter with an over, if you f

O U O
Working end now travels right to left, on the LEFT of the standing end, copying the overs and unders.

After creating the tracks, which results in parallel cords duplicating overs and unders, we eve
knot the same amount of times as in 5 and 6 above, whilst splitting the tracks. To split the tra
two parallel cords, as in step 6, Enl.2 where two overs appear together in "U O O U O", treat th
working end is travelling between them in the same direction. In steps 7 and 8, if you exit the k

O U O
Working end now crosses the standing end, travels left to right splitting the two parallel cords. When they go over, the working end goes under and vice versa.



U O U O
Working end now crosses the standing end, travels right to left splitting the two parallel cords. When they go over, the working end goes under and vice versa.

For the 3x2 enlargements you will only need to follow these steps once. From here you
work. For video presentations of the above try searching YouTube for 'Tom Hall Brai
processes.
I suggest practising these methods on the 3x2 until you are familiar with the process,
second order enlargements, eg enlarging 3x2 to 11x8 or 13x8, and even to third order, e
Any feedback is welcome, as always, I'm still learning, as we all are. I aim to have som

## Enlargement Process 2

Enlarges the 3x2 to 7x4, adding 4 leads and 2 bights.

U O U

Working end travels UNDER and then on the LEFT of the standing end, characteristic of Enl. 2. The working end continues copying the overs and unders, doubling up the standing end.

enter the knot as you left. If you finished inished with an under, enter with an under.

U O O U O

Working end now travels right to left, to the RIGHT of the standing end, copying the overs and unders.

ntually arrive between the standing end and the first laid track. The final stage is to circle the acks, you follow between the parallel cords doing the opposite weave. If you go over or under hese as one and go either over both, or under both. These will split in the normal way, when the knot with an over, you enter with an under and vice versa, in contrast to when laying the tracks.

U O O U O

Working end now crosses the standing end, travels left to right splitting the two parallel cords. When they go over, the working end goes under and vice versa.

U O U O U O

Working end now crosses the standing end, travels right to left splitting the two parallel cords. When they go over, the working end goes under and vice versa.

may decide to enlarge again, double or triple the passes, or call it a day and admire your ding and Knots', where Mike Hickey has separate videos for each of the enlargement

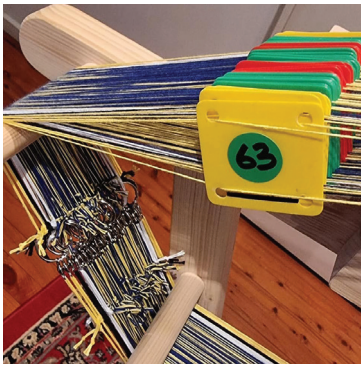
before experimenting on other THs. If you are adventurous enough perhaps look into g 3x2 to 17x12 or 19x12. Phil Cook's Advanced Grid Maker will assist with run lists. hething about herringbone knots for another issue.

# TABLET WEAVING

## by Mac

Just reporting in after finishing my latest project. Given my sidestep into Tablet Weaving over the last few months, I thought I'd try to combine with my general love of all things knotted and get back into the IGKT groove. I roped in (see what I did there?) Catherine Weaver from Tablet Weaving Theory & Practice (http://www.tabletweavingintheoryandpractice.co.uk/) to help with a draft design for our beloved IGKT logo.

Once I had that under my belt, I set about preparing my 63 tablets with 252 strands of Maurice Brassard 8/2 cotton (253 if you count the weft). I used Catherine's Tablet Weaving Draft Designer (https://jamespbarrett.github.io/tabletweave/) as a guide and slowly worked my way through this band.



The type of weave is called 'Double Face'. This is still a learning curve for me and with a bit of experience I could have probably had a little less stretch with the pattern/design, but overall, I'm happy with it.

The back is less tidy than the front and the colours are flipped out. I didn't take this to heart as the whole project was for the logo and not a flipped blue on yellow variation of it.

As far as direct knotting goes, setting up the warp initially involved tying 63 Round turn and two half hitches onto one side of the split rings at the front of the warp (each with four strands of cotton for one tablet) and then 63 Taut-line hitches to the fishing swivels on the back side

of the warp and the other side of the 16 split rings (again each with four strands of cotton from one tablet).

This is a fabulous way to be able to untwist and re-tension the warp for each card. This being required as, during the course of the weaving, some of the warps twist too much in one direction which needs to be resolved, and also as the cotton itself also stretches as you work with it. While this may seem a little labour-intensive I always enjoy the knot-tying component.

On to the next project.

Mac (Sydney Australia) Instagram@the23rdcat

## Teignmouth Maritime and Shanty Festival

September 2021 saw the Covid-cancelled 2020 'Maritime and Shanty Festival' reinstated, and very successful it was too, with seemingly the whole town joining in. Don't let the 'Shanty' bit put you off if that isn't your thing, although some of the country's finest were there in excellent voice. There were plenty of maritime themes to hold your interest, including a tops'l schooner, miles of rope and knots galore.

The highlights of the whole festival (well, for some anyway!) were two hours of well-illustrated talks from your IGKT representatives in the form of G Teenan from *KM* and P Goldstone, Dorset branch. The talks were well attended and covered such diverse topics as the Bowline: how it should be done, Granny knots, 'The Truth', and 'How the development of knotting technology led to the mighty British Empire'. Meanwhile, down on the quay, Mark Richmond, all the way from Oxford, demonstrated his considerable rope-making skills to the assembled throng. GT

# Riley Steering Wheel
## by Maurice McPartlan

A couple of months ago, the Guild website received a communication from the owner (Richard) of a Riley 14/6 Lynx tourer[1] asking if there was anyone who might help with covering the steering wheel of his car.

David Bodger passed on the query, and, having never done one, I decided to have a go. Initially, the owner was reluctant to detach the steering wheel from the car, but luckily was convinced to do so.

When Richard delivered the wheel we discussed what to cover it with. I thought that black would absorb too much light and was all for charcoal grey, however he opted for white (paracord) despite my protestations that I could not even guarantee to deliver a clean job. I have had experience of tying THs in white nylon which always stained and seemed resistant to any attempts at cleaning. Richard felt that any dirt would be part of the character and history of the car.

While waiting for the steering wheel to arrive, I spent some time thinking about the design: 3-strand coxcombing round the rim with a T-shaped TH at the junction of the four spokes with the rim. Richard also asked for something on the spokes as the covering was damaged.

Central to my wheel-covering adventure was my smallish vice which allows me to hold objects in any plane as well as rotating them on their axis, and did I need it!

I covered the rim in masking tape to give the string something to bite into and added a guide-line for the 'plaited' part of the coxcombing. I estimated I would need about 100m of 4mm paracord to allow for errors.

I cut three lengths, each of 22m, and then spent a few hours removing the core. The strings were placed in freezer bags to protect them from the environment, as well as making it easier to pass them around the rim. With a Thumb knot in each strand and a couple of Constrictor knots, we were off, trying to follow

1 It would seem that this Riley is quite distinguished as Richard has a copy of an article about his car, which appeared in *Autocar* in April 1934.

the guide-line as we progressed, as well as avoiding crossing the lines behind the rim and getting the Half-Hitches tight. I wore gloves to protect my fingers which also served to protect the string from the oil in my hands.

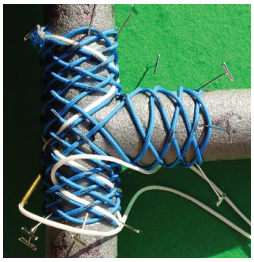
At each quadrant I tied the three strands off with a Constrictor, ran them (parallel to the rim) to the other side of the spoke, tied them again and restarted the coxcombing. I borrowed one of Jim Caswell's ideas: as I completed each quadrant, I cut a length of about 70mm of cling-wrap from a roll and used the mini-roll to bandage the completed coxcombing. I repeated this process with the THs. I found that the cling-wrap was not very resistant to my manipulating and turning the wheel and so would begin to tear, but I simply bandaged over it with more cling-film (See bottom right a completed TH on a spoke bandaged in cling film.)

On the spokes, I opted for a three-pass, 21Lx4B TH, and, being unsure of tying it directly onto the spoke, I reverted to my secret weapons: pipe-lagging and latex gloves! I was able to draw a 'cylinder plan' of the TH, adjust it to fit the circumference of the pipe-lagging and pin it around the spoke.

The ability to spin the wheel on my clamp made it a lot easier to follow the drawing and complete the first pass of the knot. I then removed the lagging, tripled the knot and tightened it. Each of these THs took me one to two days to tie!

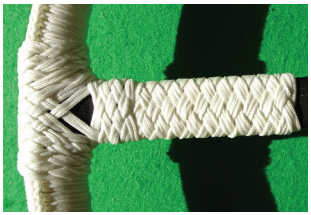
With the four spokes covered, it was time to put on 4x 'T'-THs. In preparation I had decided on a knot consisting of a 6B horizontal and 4B vertical, but that is where I struggled!

I had carved some more pipe lagging to cover the joint (see left) and prepared some drawings but could not for the life of me tie the knot onto the wheel.



Finally, I came up with the idea of doubling my original knot – tied in blue – with a white cord, replicating the turns, overs and unders, onto the lagging I had placed on the wheel.

Though I had to follow the weave of the blue version, I only needed to pay attention to the position of the white cord and whether it crossed itself going over or under.



Once it was tied, even here, not at the first attempt, it was simple enough to remove the lagging and double the knot. This process took an average of two to three days per knot, though the first one took more like five days! Having struggled with the first, I also decided to use an 'old' piece of paracord to tie the knot on the wheel and then replaced it with new and clean paracord. This also allowed me to tie the knot onto the wheel without latex gloves which also simplified the process.

Richard came to pick up his steering wheel and seemed quite chuffed with it as, within the day, I had received a picture of it back in its rightful place.

While I really enjoyed this new experience, I was relieved to finish it and I cannot really see myself taking on another in the foreseeable future, however iconic the car!

# Back in the Saddle Again

## by Richard Hopkins

Last week, I returned from the first show I have been able to attend for 18 months because of the Covid restrictions. It is called the Wilderness Gathering and is held on a Bison farm at West Knoyle, Wiltshire,UK.

I was there for five days, including setting-up time, and camped and cooked in the gazebo that we use for sheltering our exhibits. It was great to see many old friends again as I have been attending this show for sixteen years having been persuaded by Jeff Wyatt to assist him, as the previous year he had been worked off his feet as a one-man stand, displaying from 8am to 5pm. A second knotter is also essential to allow for comfort breaks and visits to see what else is at the show. The friends are other exhibitors but day-visitors also come to relate how they have used the knot taught to them at previous shows.

As the name suggests, we were showing Bushcraft enthusiasts how to tie knots, and once more the favourites (or most frequently requested) were the Bowline and the Truckers' hitch with Ray Mears' Siberian hitch a close third. Eye splices were also frequently asked for. The six-knot rig is useful for teaching, but we were in front of trees so they acted as part of the classroom when thicker uprights were required.

I was not alone, although I have done the show solo a number of times. Nick Cockroft, who lives about 20 minutes drive away from the venue, also came, but he was able to go home at night.

The show organisers provide activities for the children brought to the show while their parents are attending classes, and Nick is invaluable in instructing them at the arranged sessions. This year, not many children turned up but there were some very keen youngsters who benefited from almost one-on-one tuition. Scouts are used as stewards and in their off-duty time we had a group of three very proficient and enthusiastic lads from Bathampton who picked up new ideas very quickly.

There were fewer exhibitors this year but even so about 50 stands were showing their specialities. These ranged from Iron Age blacksmithing to leatherwork, from axe-throwing (always popular under the guise of Stress Relief) to basket-making, home-made soap to beef jerky and several bow-making and archery stands.

Like any outdoor event, the weather plays an important part. We have had some glorious times in the past, but this year the Friday was WET all day and the area outside our stand quickly became a sticky goo. Luckily the ground inside remained dry so my bed space was safe. On bringing my car from the car park to the site on Sunday evening to load up I got stuck in the mud and needed a tow from a 4x4.

I cannot emphasize enough how enjoyable it was to be demonstrating again and the constant stream of people coming to ask questions at our stand shows that there is need for a knot tyer's presence in some of the most unexpected places. It is tiring but very rewarding especially when people bring work to show what they have done in the previous year.

Get out and do a show. You might even enjoy it.

A *KM* editor represented the Guild at the 75th anniversary celebrations of the SS Freshspring, the last of the Admiralty steam-powered water carriers, berthed on the river Taw, Bideford, UK.

Graham Hobbs Photography

# Magic Fibres?

## by Brian Taylor

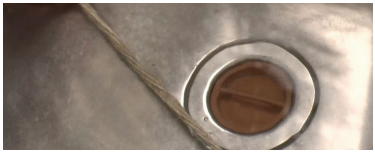
What follows relates to experiments on *Agave sisalana* fibres. Research indicates that plant fibres have an inherent twist in the cellulose structure. Bast fibres being different to leaf fibres. One of the tests to identify fibres is to wet them and see which way they twist on drying. Has anyone got a better (layman's) explanation?

**A Strange Phenomenon**

Recently, I wanted to prepare some short lengths of string for use as label ties and thought I would immerse them in warm water, as you do when making a sailor's whisk. The pictures show what happened. I was so surprised, I repeated this procedure to see if it would happen again. It did.

I had a roll of Sisal twine, Z-laid and coiled anticlockwise in the roll. I pulled out a couple of metres. It was all curly.

I cut six lengths approximately 12in long. I immersed them in warm water and stroked them gently a couple of times, and as I did this I noticed they wrapped around each other into a S-laid strand. I did not apply any pressure to them. As I watched, I could see yarns continue to wrap around each other.



I separated them and laid them out in straight lines. I then gathered them together into a loose bundle of straight yarns, and left them to dry.

After about four hours, they had, without any intervention, wrapped themselves into a very loose Z-laid strand.

I am most intrigued by all this and would love an explanation. This is a link to a video of the procedure: https://youtube/ZK1B_gqyImQ. When the yarns are in the sink, they can be seen to continue wrapping around each other all by themselves.

Having seen what happened to the sisal, I decided to experiment with an Agave leaf and partially exposed the fibres at one end, using a hammer and a block of wood. The hammer does not damage the fibres. After an hour, I had this.

I left it for five minutes after loosely finger-combing them straight. They had started to twist around each other into loose Z-laid strings.

Half an hour later this was the result. No intervention by me.

Two hours later the strings were quite evident.

24 hours later with very light finger-combing to separate them.

Having noticed this before I wanted to repeat the operation as my thoughts were that mankind, thousands of years ago, would have discovered this phenomenon and it would have led them to devising methods of twisting strings to make them longer and stronger and then to twist several strings to make rope.

# Bundaberg Gliding Club Rope

## by Brian Taylor

At the Hervey Bay Historical Village, we host visiting groups from around the State (Queensland, Australia).

I usually do the rope-making demonstrations and after a recent visit by the Bundaberg Gliding Club group, the organiser asked me if we could use some rope. My answer was, of course, a resounding, "Yes please".

He said he would drop it off the following week, which he did and needed a hand to lift it out of his car. Imagine my surprise and delight when I saw two massive rolls of 8mm poly rope. Each roll consisted of about 1,800m and it took two of us to lift each roll. The picture shows a 2ft length held out…hard-laid, very stiff.

After thanking the club profusely, my next (unvoiced) question was, "What can I make that we could sell in our shop to raise funds?"

Before I could gather my thoughts, several of our members asked if they could have a bit to take home. I cut off ten 15m lengths and gave them to our volunteers. I now only had 1,650m in that roll to use.

I decided we would make some cable-laid towropes first. The original breaking strain (BS) of this rope was approximately 1,200kg so I guessed that a used rope would be half that, so doubling the thickness should bring back the original BS. Using three strands of the rope to make towropes 5m long should be fine. It was an interesting exercise as the rope was very hard-laid, so there was no twisting needed as it began to lay up immediately after only a couple of turns. We put an eye splice in each end, which was not easy as everything was back to front, but we managed OK after a couple of goes. Now had 1,550m left.

One of our members asked for a 20m long cable-laid piece to lash stuff on to his trailer. This used close to another 100m. 1,450m left.

I took the rest of this roll home and started making mats. I made four, initially, using up 30-50m for each one; a Kringle, an Ocean Plait, a 7x3 TH and an oblong one. Each one had 6 or 7 passes. Des Pawson's *Knotcraft* was very useful. I side-spliced the ends underneath. The rope being very stiff, the mats hold their shape well. Under 1,200m left.

*7x3 TH mat*

*Ocean Plait (650mm x 350mm)*

I decided to sell some of the rope as rope, being less work for me to produce, and measured out five 30m lengths and coiled them up for sale. Two have sold already to a local muso with a small boat. About 1,000m left.

I started to make a fender, but the rope is so hard laid that the over-2 Crown knot loosened almost immediately when I started the next row.

So I decided to make a 7ft x 4ft cargo net, which went quite well, although I had not made one before. It used up over 60m of rope, and one of our volunteers bought it for $40.

*Cargo net knots*

The next to be made were eight Monkey's Fists with a loop (Des's method again). These took around 5m each: six passes with a small plastic ball inside. One guy bought two to use as fenders on his boat.

A further idea was to make plant pot holders based on a 4x3 TH with six passes, and the ends glued inside. I made 10 which look very nice and hold their shape well and use up just over 5m each.

A bit more thought led to weaving small baskets. I couldn't us the Lark's Head method for the base as the rope was too stiff and the basket ended up wobbly. Having searched the net for methods with no luck, I contacted a company which made baskets from old cray-fishing ropes, but their answer was, "Sorry, can't help. Took us too long to work it out. It's a trade secret". I came up with a different way for making a much better base and made a couple, and a hanging basket, each using about 7m. I will describe my method in another article.

*Pot base layout*

*Pot base*

The original rope had two long splices in it, so after cutting those out and making a couple more mats and pot holders, I got to the end of the first roll. (Phew)

It was really great to have this rope to practise various knots and ideas and not have to worry about cutting off the right lengths. I probably over-estimated what was needed for each item but it was comforting to always have a bit spare after completion. I now have a bag of offcuts, various lengths which can be used for fender filling, basket spokes, knot practice etc.

I then brought the second roll home. Off we go again! If anyone has any ideas related to what I could make as saleable souvenirs, I would welcome their thoughts.

Brian Taylor webmaster@herveybaymuseum.com.au

## Message from the Secretary

My thanks to those of you who responded to my plea in the last *KM* for people who would be willing to share their knowledge and expertise when I get email knotting queries. If you are reading this and are willing to share your skills please do join the little team. The queries will probably be few, often simple and you never need feel awkward about saying 'no' to anything I send you. Just email me your name, and if you wish, the areas in which you feel comfortable about sharing knowledge.

Thank you. David Bodger. secretary@igkt.net

# Knotting in Egypt

## by Dr Sahar Abdelazim

*During the 2021 AGM, our Membership Secretary informed us that, among the new members, was one from Egypt, Dr Sahar Abdelazim, so we set about trying to find out what her interests might be. We were also curious to know whether she could shed light on any literature regarding knotting and ropework from the Islamic period. We hope this will be the basis of a future article*

*Dr Sahar sent us a long piece on the history of the use of string/rope in Egypt from Pharaonic times to the present. However, this is rather long and we are not sure if there are any issues with copyright. If we can clarify this, we might put it onto the KM section of the website.*

*In the meantime, Dr Sahar sent us the following pictures of some of her own intricate creations, all of which are made with copper wire, and painted in various colours, If we can sort out communications, we hope that we might receive more details about her delicate work.*

*The Editors*

*Ring painted gold with red stone*

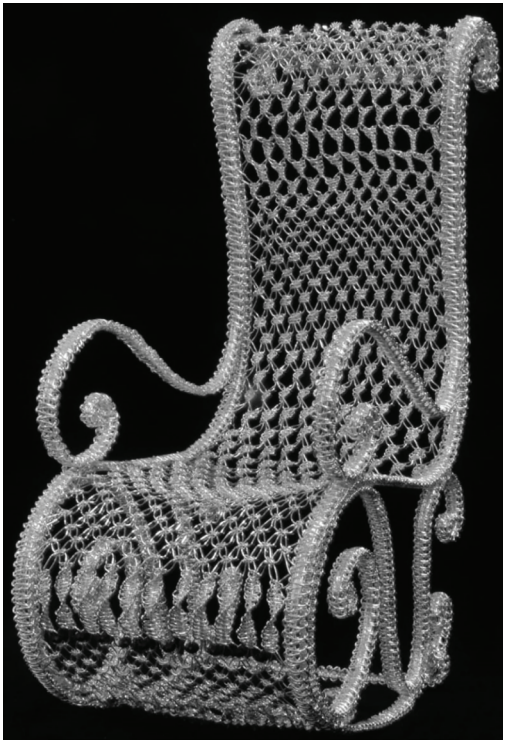
*Bracelet painted gold and silver*

*Pendant necklace with blue agate*

*Necklace painted gold*

*Brooch painted silver*

*Earrings painted gold*



*Chair 20cm high*

## IGKT Meeting Geelong Australia September 2022

A message from Barry Smith:

Hope all are keeping well and safe. With the current COVID situation in Australia (we still have border restrictions, Victoria's public venues have had multiple closures and changes to events, and you still need to have double-vaxxed proof to enter business premises), we have had to change our plans. All members contacted agree it's wise to push back our meeting until **2nd- 4th September 2022.**

The National Wool Museum will still make us welcome and Geelong is a great place to visit with plenty to do and see in the region.

Overseas visitors please feel free to contact me with any questions at nautiknotstwo@yahoo.com.au

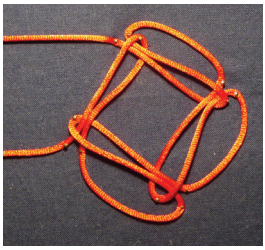
Meanwhile, keep on tangling and developing your craft.

# Back to Square 1x1

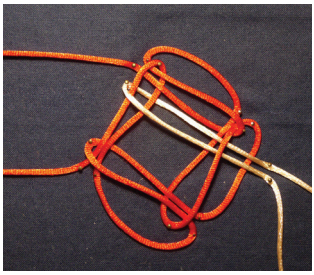
## by Europa Chang Dawson

Till now, every Pan Chang knot shown has been expanded by adding extra finger-bights at the edges. So a 2x2 knot of longevity becomes one of 3x3 when an extra finger bight is added at each of the first two stages. This method also works for expanding into rectangular PCs: by adding one finger at the first stage and two at the second stage, the 2x2 PC grows into a 3x4 PC and so on. (See *KM* 136)

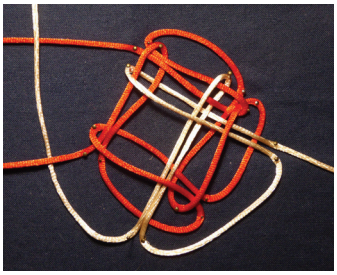
Now let us consider the possibility of expanding the PC knots from the middle of the square (or rectangle). The demonstration may suggest that this is an easier method of tying PCs, but remember, you have worked through a series of PC variations already. This method has its own limitations when the expansions are non-rectangular forms.

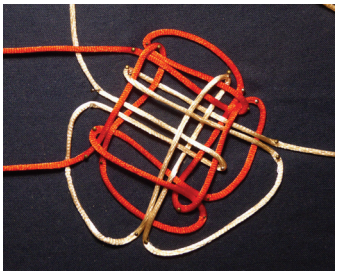


Starting with the trivial case of the 1x1 PC opened out, and, for clarity, limiting the expansion to a square form only, the following steps will expand the knot into a 2x2 PC.

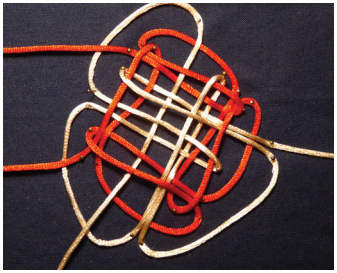
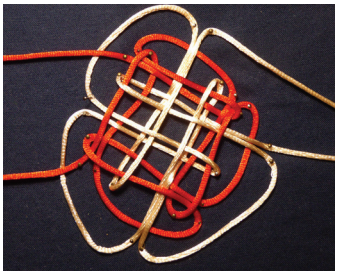


*The first extension-bight, started from the opposite corner, and running exactly parallel (including overs and unders) to the one entering from the same side.*



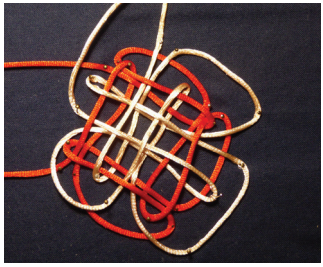
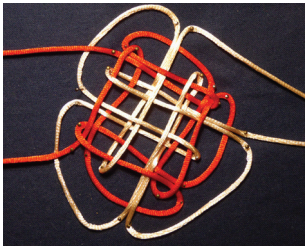


*The second and third bights added, also running exactly parallel to their corresponding finger bights in the 1x1 opened out.*

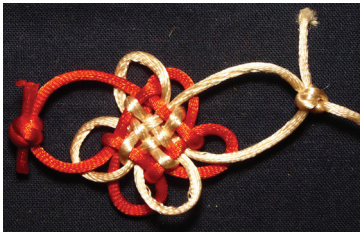



*The locking bight, which needs to be interwoven, shown in two steps.*

In tying with two colours, you need to work out in advance where the four ends of the two cords will emerge:

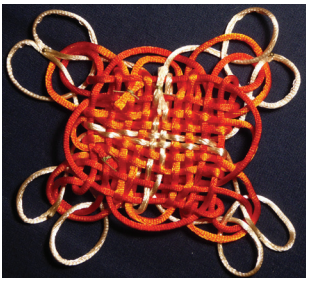
compare  with 

In one case, the ends finish on opposite sides, in the other, on adjacent sides.



*The knot tightened up. Right and wrong sides respectively.*

Sometimes it is possible to adjust the appearance by tying a Half knot with the ends (left), or by working one end back into the knot and seizing the ends (right).



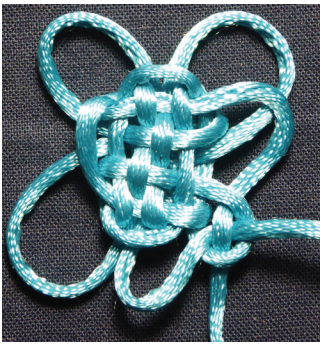
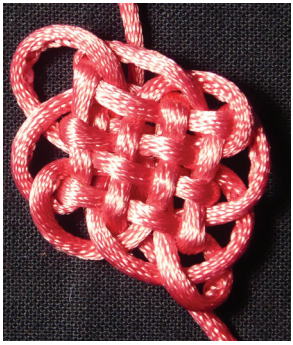
In using a single cord rather than two cords of the same colour, it is possible to play with the arc-bights so that they overlap like a grommet rather than show as two floppy layers. This helps to give a stiffer knot if required.

Two colours have been used to make the knotting sequence clear. However, there is evidence that more than one colour was used when the knotter was able to braid or purchase more than one colour at a time. Some dyestuffs cost more than others, so most people would have worked with a limited palette, and red being considered lucky, the knots that are found most frequently are red.

In one of the great Chinese classical novels, T*he Dream of the Red Chamber* (also translated into English as *The Story of the Stone*) there is an early chapter in which the central character has a discussion with his grandmother's favourite maid about the colours that should be used together – though in the end the maid refuses pertly to tie any knots for him as he is too demanding. (If only they mentioned the knots too!)

Most of this novel was written before 1763 (when the author died) though the last section was completed by another man, and the book was not published until 1791. Although the tale is set in the era of Kublai Khan, the descriptions of everyday life in a large household are - according to one of my great-aunts – very typical of life in eighteenth century China. By this time, the amulet knot was beginning to give place to the primarily decorative knot, and so the developments using two, or even three, colours were considered acceptable.

With this justification, some of the knots illustrated here have shown developments in various colours. Once the method is understood the possibilities are limited only by the knotter's imagination. Bendy-bights can be used to leave a hole in the knot, the expansion could take place off-centre, and then there are all the possibilities of interlinking and interlacing arc-bights… have a play! I do suggest, though, that you stay with the rectangular forms in the central PC until you are really confident, for some of the other shapes will lose the enclosing hollow centre.

# Shipshape Heritage Partnerships
## by Des Pawson

**The Shipshape Heritage Partnership 1 & 2**

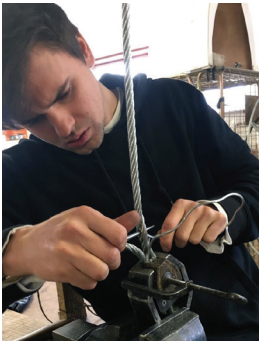
*Organised and run by National Historic Ships, the official voice for historic vessels in the UK.*

The aims of these projects was to transfer heritage skills associated with historic and traditional vessels to young people. The projects ran for five years in two stages, mainly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and a number of smaller organisations.

As one area of training was ropework, rigging, splicing (both fibre and wire), as well as sail maintenance and repair, the IGKT contributed modest funding to the project. On the 12th October 2021, Terry Barns and I attended the awards ceremony at Trinity House and heard about the success of these two projects.

During their training the young people had an intensive three months at the International Boatbuilding College in Lowestoft and placements with a variety of museums and sailing vessels, of all shapes and sizes, all over the UK. There, their skills were further developed in real situations, experiencing the many and varied ways in which sailing ships operate and their working methods. From the 26 students who finished the project (from the UK, France, Netherlands, USA, Bermuda and Ireland), 23 are now working in the Maritime Heritage Sector.

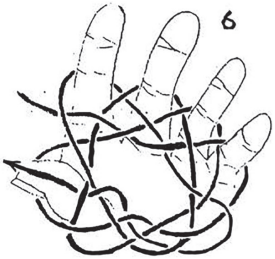
It was good to see the IGKT name and logo up amongst the big sponsors, highlighting our belief that the world of knots and ropework is an important part of the maritime world.



# PUBLICATIONS GROUP

In KM 152 we shared a page from *Charlie's Knots* purporting to be the instructions for tying a 14Bx4L Möbius TH, as Adam Masters had suggested that this might contain a mistake, we decided to ask the members. We would like to thank him as well as David Lambert who not only responded to our request, but also shared a neat solution to tying in the hand, and also to Gordon Teenan for a different approach to a spare 'hand' (see Letters in this issue).

The answer to the question is that this is indeed a 14Bx4L Möbius TH, though the 'correction' suggested by both Adam and David does lead to a 9Bx4L TH – more of that later.




What we have realised, after multiple efforts at tying the Möbius TH, is that going from image 6 to the final tightened TH is a bit delicate. The first thing to keep in mind is that the 180° 'Möbius twist' in the fabric of the TH lies between the thumb and the index finger in the image. The second is that the form of the TH holds better once it is doubled. So our suggestion is that the first step from figure 6 should be to tighten the knot as much as possible while keeping it on the fingers. Then double it – much easier if you use either David or Gordon's 'spare hands'. Then transfer the knot so that the fingers of one hand pass through the centre of the knot and hold the structure taut while you continue tightening, being aware of where the twist in the knot sits. Good luck! **We would love to hear from anyone who has a foolproof method of transferring the structure from diagram 6 to the Möbius.**

*A completed Möbius TH*

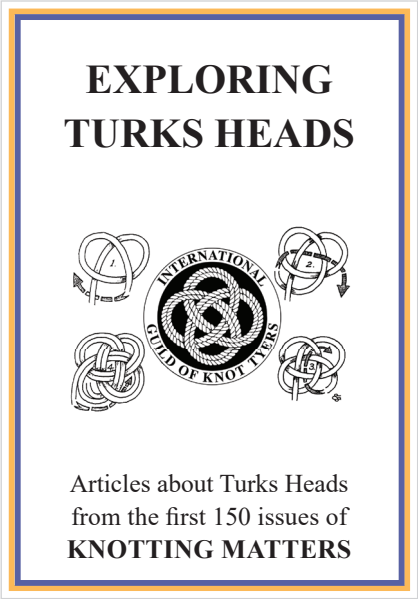
Coming back to the 9Bx4L TH, it just so happens that Andy, our Supplies Secretary, was down to his last copy of *Charlie's Knots* and so the PG decided to include the 9Bx4L TH in the new edition and it has just come fresh from the printers. We have put the two knots in question on facing pages and discreetely highlighted the change in image 4 of the 9Bx4L, in case anyone thinks that the two are the same.

We are also pleased to announce that *Exploring Turks Heads* is now in print and available to members. See Penny Bodger's review opposite.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## EXPLORING TURKS HEADS

Articles about Turks Heads from the first 150 issues of *Knotting Matters*
*Published by IGKT 2021*




As the title of this book implies it is indeed an exploration and will therefore appeal to a wide selection of people with different knot-tying interests and experience. The layout is clear and the simple wire binding is ideal allowing pages to be laid open while attempting any of the examples in practice. The pages are enhanced by fill-in photographs of some of the splendid Turks Heads that have been tied by Guild members in the past. The variety of Turks Heads which can be tied for both practical and artistic purposes makes this an ideal subject for collection from previous magazines. It will also prevent the possible loss of this information and make it available to non-Guild members.

While the articles have all appeared in print in *Knotting Matters* over the years, it can be a complicated business to track them down, get ideas and make comparisons. This book simplifies the job and provides all manner of interesting challenges for beginners through to seasoned experts. Many of us may find inspiration to attempt new projects and can use the comparisons to evaluate which approach is the most suitable. Do we want to tie it in the hand? What is the disc method? Should we make a cylindrical jig? What are the rules of what is and isn't possible in constructing Turks Heads? How do we estimate the length of cord we need?

Some of the articles probably appeal mainly to serious Turks Head practitioners but they will stimulate comparisons and discussions between the experts. Many may be encouraged to try new methods and approaches to enhance their standard procedures and build on the experience of those who are no longer with us.

The exchange of ideas always stimulates new approaches and projects as is apparent from some of the references in the articles.

The articles are listed in the Contents page and are printed in the order in which they appeared in *Knotting Matters.* One possible improvement could have been the addition of an index of the authors, many of whom have more than one entry, thus making it easier to group and cross reference the articles.

In summary, this book fits neatly into the Guild Constitution of aiming to promote education in the art, craft and science of knots and knot-tying and makes it very difficult to resist the challenges of trying something new. Indeed a couple of non-knot-tyers, when shown the book and encouraged to flip through it briefly, responded with the comments "That looks interesting" and "I wouldn't mind having a go at some of them". Penny Bodger

# IGKT 40th Anniversary Meeting

## 5th- 8th May 2022

**Hallowtree Scout Activity Centre**
**Ipswich UK**

**Please see the enclosure for more information which is also available on the website.**

**Before 7th March 2022 please register your interest in attending the meeting,**
**by e-mail to treasurer@igkt.net**
**or by post to IGKT**
**Oaken Cleave, Cobbaton, Umberleigh EX37 9SG UK**
**Further details and instructions will be sent, as soon as available, to all those indicating their interest.**

## Errata

The editors are grateful to the member who brought two errors in the previous issue of *Knotting Matters* 152 to their attention. On p25 the final line was incomplete: the sentence should have been continuous with the first line on the following page. On p40, the first sentence of the second paragraph was also cut short, and should have continued with the text on the following line. The sense of both sentences was rather obscured by these mistakes for which we apologise.

# BRANCHES

## Australia

Contact: Robert Underhill
rvumoose@icloud.com

Tel:+61 488 777 785
34 Dawson Place, Donnybrook,
WA 6239 Australia

## Belgium

Contact: Ronny Wouters
rcwouters@scarlet.be
Tel: +32(0)3 658 7937
Venue: Akkerlaan 24, 2900 Schoten, België

## Canada

Southern Ontario Knot Tyers
http://knotcanada.webs.com/
Contact: John Staley
southern.ontario.knotyers@gmail.com
Tel: +1(1) 905 389 2509
Venue: Hamilton, Ontario

## France

www.igkt.fr
Contact: Jean-Pierre Durand
durand0547@orange.fr
Tel: +33(0)6 64 00 66 91

## Germany

http://www.knotengilde.de/
Contact: Yuval Dvoran
info@knotengilde.de

Internationale Gilde der
Knotenmacher Deutsche Sektion e.V.
c/o Matthias Böving
Kappenstrasse 22
45473 Mülheim/Ruhr

## Netherlands

Contact: André van der Salm
andrevdsalm@gmail.com
Tel: +31 (0) 625067174
Venue: Binnenvaart Museum,
Maasstraat 19, 3313 CR Dordrecht.

## New Zealand

All enquries about this branch: contact the Guild's Web Administrator.

## United Kingdom

### Dorset - UK

Contact: Peter Goldstone
goldstonepg@aol.com
Tel: +44 (0)1725 516 258 or
Mobile: +44 (0)7702 733005
Venue: The Ship Inn, Custom House Quay, Weymouth DT4 8BE

### East Anglian - UK

Contact: Stuart Weston
pugwash1941@gmail.com
Tel: +44 (0)1449 674 327 or
+44 (0)7801 239 731
Venue: Windmill Room, Abbots Hall Primary School, Danescourt Ave, Stowmarket, Suffolk

### Midlands - UK

Contact: Bruce Turley
bruce@btknots.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1214 534 124
Venue: The Old Swan Inn,
(Ma Pardoes), 89 Halesowen Road,
Netherton, Dudley, DY2 9PY

**North West England - UK**

Contact: Ian Rogers
iansrogers@aol.com
Tel: +44 (0)1606 590 729
Venue: Red Lion, 1 Wharton Rd, Winsford, Chester CW7 3AA and Tattenhall Marina, Newton Lane, Tattenhall, Chester CH3 9NE

**Solent - UK**

http://igkt-solent.co.uk
Contact: Chris Jenkins
igktchris@btinternet.com
Tel: +44 (0)2392 601 779
Venue: Fareham Sailing and Motor Boat Club, Lower Quay, Fareham, Hampshire PO16 0RA

**Surrey - UK**

www.surreyknots.org.uk
Contact: Tony Shellard
secretary@surreyknots.org.uk
Tel: +44(0)1483 502 156
Venue: Guildford District Scout Centre, Nightingale Road, Guildford, GU1 1ER

**West Country Knotters - UK**

Contact: Richard Hopkins
richardhopkins907@gmail.com
Tel: +44 (0)1179 867 146
Venue: The Benjamin Perry Boathouse, Phoenix Wharf, Lower Guinea Street, Bristol BS1 6TJ

**Yorkshire - UK**

Contact: David Pearson
wayzegoose_uk@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: +44 (0)113 257 2689
Venue: Pudsey Scout Headquarters, The Lanes, Pudsey, LS28 7AS

## United States of America

**Alaskan Branch - USA**

Contact: Charles Rigden
charles@rigdencpa.com
Tel: +(1) 1 928 231 2775
Venue: Anchorage Senior Center, 1300 East 19th Avenue, AK 99501

**North American Branch - Knot in the Middle - USA**

www.igktnab.org
Contact: John Staley
southern.ontario.knotyers@gmail.com
Tel: +(1) 1 905 389 2509

**North American Branch - Mid-Atlantic Region - USA**

Contact: Michael Pollock
nexialist02@yahoo.com
Tel: +(1) 1 301 649 1165

**Pacific Americas - USA**

www.igktpab.org/
Contact: Peter Glick
PMGlick@gmail.com
Tel: +(1) 1 310 871 8611
Meetings on line during Covid, but Usual venue: Los Angeles Maritime Institute 73 Berth Suite 2, San Pedro, CA 90731

***All branch details as on IGKT website on 02/11/21***

**BACK COVER: MINIATURE CHAIR BY SAHAR ABDELAZIM (SEE P39)**

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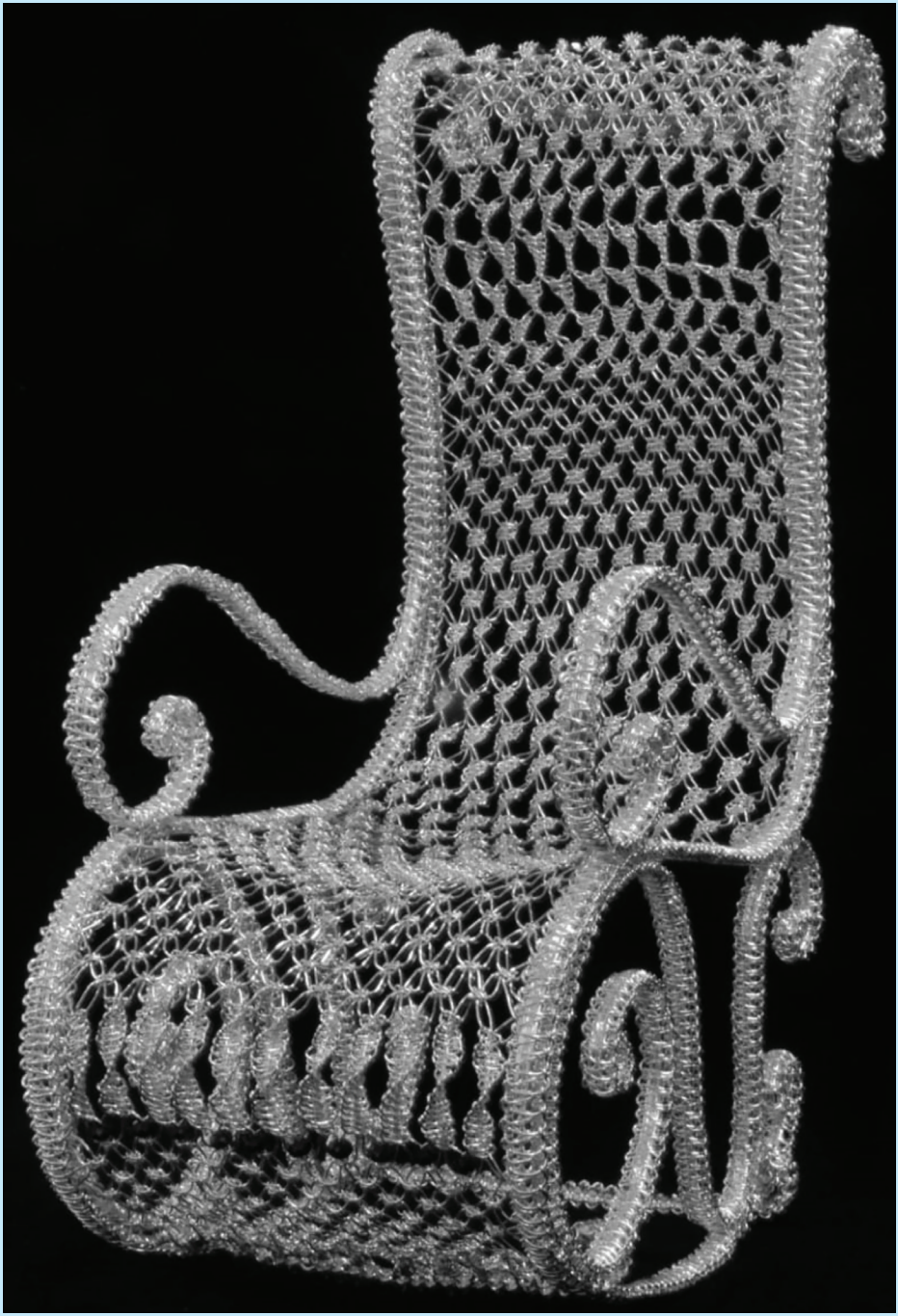
If you do not use e-mail, please contact the IGKT Supplies Secretary, address above